the fine inscription which is printed as T.-Narasipur 23, dated in 1663 A.D. in the reign of Dodda Dēva Rāja Wodeyar. He was probably the person who subsequently distinguished himself not only as the chief minister of Chikka Dēva Rāja Wodeyar, but also as a prominent literary figure of that reign. The Vaishnava poet Tirumalārya, called Rāmāyanam Tirumalārya, composed the copper-plate inscription numbered Seringapatam 64, dated in 1729 A.D., in the reign of the Mysore King Dodda Krishna Rāja Wodeyar. He was, we are told by himself, "skilled in Karnāta (*i.e.*, Kannada), Āndhra (Telugu) and Sanskrit poetry and in singing." He was, he adds, a "constant reader of the *Rāmāyana* and *Bhārata*" and it was, perhaps, for this reason he was called "Rāmāyanam Tirumalāchārya." He was called upon by the King to write this *Sāsana-grantha* "in a manner agreeable to both donor and donee, a record of all merit (to the one) and prosperity (to the other)." The poet has eminently succeeded in his task, for the inscription reads really like a good poem, conceived in the best post-Kālidāsa *Kāvya* style. The same remark applies to most of the *sāsana-granthas*, which will be found scattered through the many volumes of the *Epigraphia Carnātica*, in as much as they exhibit all the characteristics of the post-Kālidāsa *Kāvya* style. The poets who composed them, from about the twelfth century onwards, display their skill in the use of *slēsha* or double entender, profusely use long compounds in verse, and employ a variety of metres. They impress the reader that they are thoroughly conversant with the rules of the *Kāvya* style of composition and demonstrate, as it were, the extent to which they can use it.

II. PRĀKRIT LITERATURE.

Prākrit Inscriptions in the State.

That Prākrit was a cultivated language in the State in very early times may be inferred from the ancient

inscriptions in that language found in it. The earliest reference to it in the State is to be found in the Asōka inscriptions discovered by Mr. Rice in the Molakālmuru Taluk of Chitaldrug District. These inscriptions are engraved in the Brāhmi script, from which the Dēvanāgari and other alphabets of India are derived, but expressed in the Prākrit language. The dialect used is the one known as Māgadhi, then current at the capital of the Mauryan Empire, where the text was evidently prepared. These edicts were, according to the inscriptions, written by the Scribe (*Lepikarēna*) Pada, who makes use of the Kharōshti characters of the north-west Punjab, written from left to right, to sign his name. The date of the Mysore edicts has been determined by Sir Vincent Smith to be 252 B.C. Thus Prākrit goes back to a time much anterior to the 3rd century B.C., for inscriptions of this nature presume a knowledge of the language in which they are written on the part of the people of the locality where they are found.

Prākrit inscriptions have been so far found in the north-west part of the State, as also on certain leaden coins found at Chitaldrug. They refer to the Sātavāhana and early Kadamba Kings who bore rule in that part of the State during the 1st and 2nd century A.D. (*Vide* Chapter IV above). Two of these are on the well-known Malavalli stone, in what has been called the Cave characters. One of these—that of Sātakarni Haritīputra—contains many archaic terms and has been assigned, on the authority of Dr. Burgess, to the close of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. Another inscription of the same king has been found at Banavāsi and it is also in Prākrit. Both these record grants to Brāhmans. The other Prākrit inscription on the Malavalli stone mentions the confirmation of a grant by Sivaskanda-Varman Hāritīputra. It has been assigned by Mr. Rice to about 250 A.D. The Prākrit employed is the Mahārāshtri

form. Dr. Bülher considered the inscription as evidence that this was already at the time it was engraved a cultivated language in the South. Brāhmans apparently were among those who used it for literary purposes, this inscription itself having been engraved at the instance of the donee, a Brāhman, in the current language of the day. The later history of Prākrit is shrouded in mystery. Until the fifth century A.D., we have scarcely any trace of it, when we find it used by the Jains, who apparently cultivated it with the Brāhmans.

Prākrit works.

Prākrit works, in fact, have come down to us, mostly in connection with the Jains. It was until the 11th century the sacred language of the Jains. In that century Sanskrit was generally adopted by them for literary purposes, though they largely employed the dominant Vernaculars of the countries in which they promulgated their religion. Thus, in Mysore, Kannada was cultivated by them; in the Tamil country, Tamil, which owes much to them, and there is reason to believe in the Telugu country, Telugu was equally largely used by them, though their works have not, singularly enough, come down to us in the profusion they have done in the Kannada and Tamil countries. Among the Prākrit works so far traced are:—*Trailōkyapragnāpati*, a work referred to in the *Lōkavibhāga* and dealing like it with Jaina cosmography. It consists of nine *adikharnas* but does not give the name of its author. It should be earlier than the *Lokavibhāga*, which was important enough to be copied in the 5th century A.D. The Jain poet Srīvardhanadēva, also known as Tumbalurāchārya, who has been assigned to the 7th century A.D., wrote, it would appear, some works in Prākrit which have not come down to us. Among other works are *Anuprēksha*, by Kundakundāchārya, from whom Jaina *gurus* claim their descent; and *Darsanasāra* by Dēvasēna. A Prākrit work

known through a Kannada rendering of it may also be noted. Pāyanavarni, the author of *Jnānachandra-charite* which gives an account of the Jain prince Jnānachandra, states that the story was originally written in Prākrit by Vāsachandra, that it was subsequently rendered into Kannada *Shatpadi* by Pūjyapādayōgi and that his own work is based on this latter work. Pāyanavarni belonged to Sravana Belgola and composed his work in 1659. Private libraries in the State are known to possess many other Prākrit works and only a thorough search for them, carried out on systematic lines, can disclose their actual number and character.

III. Kannada Literature.

History and extent of Kannada Literature.

On the history and extent of Kannada literature, an immense amount of light has been thrown in recent years. Messrs. Kittel and Rice were the pioneers in the field of research into Kannada literature and the results of their researches have been embodied in their introductions to Nāgavarma's *Chhandōmbudhi* and Bhattākalanka's *Sabdānusāsana* respectively. A fuller and more accurate account has recently appeared in the *Karnātaka Kavi-Charite* or *Lives of Kannada Poets*, written in the Kannada language by Messrs. S. G. Narasimhachar and R. A. Narasimhachar.

The oldest Kannada work of which manuscripts have actually been obtained is the *Kavirājamārga* of Nripatunga, which was composed in the 9th century. But we have references which enable us to date the rise of Kannada literature to a period much farther back. In fact, there seems reason to believe that Kannada was one of the earliest, if not the earliest, to be cultivated of all the South Indian languages. Ancient inscriptions give us the initial information on the subject.

The first notice we have of authorship is in connection with the Ganga Kings. Durvinīta, about the 6th century,